



WISEWOMAN

Success Story 11 Connecticut QuitLine Helps WISEWOMAN Program Serve Spanish-Speaking Women

Location Hartford, Connecticut

Focus Remove the language barriers that prevent Latina women from having access to smoking cessation support services.

Strategy The Hartford Hospital WISEWOMAN clinic refers women who smoke to the Connecticut QuitLine, where they are connected to a counselor who speaks a language and dialect they understand.

Early Successes Referring women to the state QuitLine offers them free, convenient, safe, and anonymous access to smoking cessation support services. Through the QuitLine, women have access to a Quit Kit and referrals to local cessation programs or one-on-one counseling sessions. By promoting the QuitLine, the WISEWOMAN program can support Latina women in their efforts to quit smoking without increasing WISEWOMAN program costs.

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Connecticut's minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour attracts a large Latino population to its major metropolitan areas. Often these men and women have no health insurance or access to health care.

Almost 70% of the participants in the Hartford Hospital WISEWOMAN clinic are Latina. The clinic makes a special effort to target Spanish-speaking women over the age of 40. Staff members at the Hartford Hospital WISEWOMAN clinic speak Spanish, but the hospital does not have enough resources to hire the additional staff needed to offer a smoking cessation program.

So the WISEWOMAN clinic refers women who smoke to the Connecticut QuitLine, where they are connected immediately with a counselor who speaks a language and a dialect they can understand.

The QuitLine is part of the Connecticut Department of Public Health. To access the QuitLine, participants call 211. This connects them with the United Way's Infoline, a referral network designed to connect people in need with local, regional, or statewide agencies. All Infoline counselors are trained as QuitLine caseworkers.

The state QuitLine is an ideal resource for Latina women who are trying to quit smoking. The counselors are available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In contrast the clinic is open only from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., when it is difficult for many women to schedule a counseling session.

In addition, women can call the QuitLine from the safety and comfort of their own homes. Women who smoke may be ashamed to admit it or may want to talk about smoking in the context of other issues such as pregnancy or drug addiction. Calling the QuitLine guarantees them anonymity and gives

them access to counselors who are trained to help people in crisis. The Connecticut QuitLine also follows up with clients after 3, 6, and 12 months.

Women who call the QuitLine receive their choice of three free services. They can get a Quit Kit of materials designed to help them quit on their own, a referral to a local cessation program, or as many as five sessions of one-on-one phone counseling.

So far the referrals and the counseling sessions are the most requested services. "They can use all three services if they need to, and if they want more counseling they can get that too—all for free," says QuitLine Manager Stacy Costello.

Importance of Success

By promoting the QuitLine, the WISEWOMAN program helps Latina women quit smoking without increasing WISEWOMAN program costs.

Lessons Learned

- The QuitLine offers Latina women a chance to talk about smoking in a language they understand and at a time and place of their own choosing, when they are likely to feel more at ease. In the clinic setting, nurses and doctors deal with many different health issues in what is usually a 15-minute patient visit. The issue of smoking cessation may get lost among other concerns.
- Latina women often put themselves last when dealing with health issues. Remind women that their health is as important as that of other family members, and their health is especially important if family members depend on them.

WISEWOMAN participants can get a Quit Kit, referral to a local cessation program, or up to five one-on-one counseling sessions. "They can use all three services if they need to, and if they want more counseling, they can get that too—all for free."

**—Stacy Costello
Connecticut QuitLine Manager**